


Braille Monitor



AUGUST, 1975

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

<http://www.archive.org/details/braillemonitorau1975nati>

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

A Publication of the
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*

National Offices
218 RANDOLPH HOTEL BLDG.
FOURTH & COURT STREETS
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

Washington Office
DUPONT CIRCLE BLDG., SUITE 212
1346 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN INKPRINT, BRAILLE, AND ON TALKING BOOK DISCS
BY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Editor

PERRY SUNDQUIST
4651 MEAD AVENUE
SACRAMENTO, CALIF. 95822

Associate Editor

HAZEL tenBROEK
2652 SHASTA ROAD
BERKELEY, CALIF. 94708

NEWS ITEMS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR

ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE SENT TO
2652 SHASTA ROAD, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94708

DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND AND SENT TO
RICHARD EDLUND, TREASURER, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
BOX 11185, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111.

* * *

If you or a friend wishes to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

“I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$____ (or, “____percent of my net estate”, or “the following stocks and bonds: ____”) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons.”

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MRS. GRANNIS RESIGNS	292
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN	
NAC GETS LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE: MISSISSIPPI STYLE	293
BY ROBERT R. SIBLEY	
PIKES AND OTHER ROADS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE BLIND	297
BY FLORENCE GRANNIS	
SUBREGIONALS, MULTISTATE CENTERS, AND OTHER MATTERS	300
LIBRARIANS READ OUT NAC	302
NO-NAC RULE IN CALIFORNIA	302
BY PERRY SUNDQUIST	
NAC, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND THE TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND	304
EYE OF NAC NO LONGER ON RFB	311
" . . . THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE"	313
THE U. S. FOREIGN SERVICE NOT FOR THE BLIND?	315
BY RAMI RABBY	
RADIO READING SERVICE MEETING DRAWS 200	318
BY ELAINE DAVENPORT	
BLIND ROPE MAKER	320
BY BURTON SWOPE	
LOUISIANA CONVENTION	321
BY HARVEY HEAGY	
DELAWARE CONVENTION	323
MONITOR MINIATURES	325

MRS. GRANNIS RESIGNS

BY
KENNETH JERNIGAN

Ever since 1960 Mrs. Florence Grannis has been a key factor in the development of Iowa's programs for the blind. She has been primarily responsible for building and directing our library and has played a part in all other phases of the work of the Commission for the Blind. Increasingly in recent years she has involved herself in the Federation and its total national effort. Our statements and policies regarding library matters are strongly imprinted with her stamp—her belief that the blind are normal people with the same needs and capacities as others. In fact, she has helped us achieve new dimensions and broadened perspectives concerning library service and what it should be. Over and above all of this, she has been a colleague and friend to us all—challenging, vibrant, and full of life and spirit.

She has now decided to resign as Chief Librarian at the Commission so that she may return to the State of Washington to be near her family. Her leaving will be a blow to both the Commission and the Federation. To fill her position will be difficult; to replace her will be impossible. Fortunately, she will probably not leave until sometime early next spring, and even then, she will maintain her contacts with the Federation and continue to labor in the cause.

My association and friendship with Mrs. Grannis have enriched my life. Hundreds of other Federationists have expressed the same feeling. We wish her well in her return to her home State of Washington and we deeply regret her leaving Iowa. She has written the following letter to the members of the Federation:

DEAR NFB FRIENDS: Mr. Jernigan and the

National Federation of the Blind have had an overwhelming impact on my life. The Movement—with Mr. Jernigan leading it—is of such a nature that anyone close to it—and some not so close perhaps—is bound to be swept up in it. I know—I avow that I am a better person for having been swept into this stream. Now the time has come to cease being in the main stream—to edge to the bank or a sidestream.

As we become older, family ties mean more. My family all live in the State of Washington. My father is 86, a jim-dandy dad—I haven't seen him for four years and his time is running out. My grandson, born last August, I have never seen. My granddaughter, now aged eight, I saw last four years ago. She is growing up without us knowing each other. My children's lives are passing without the closeness I would have with them. So, when I sell my four houses and my four-plex—and who can tell when that may be—I leave my craft in the NFB stream and wheel my way back to my home state. If I do not leave by October, I shall wait until spring, for I am afraid to cross the country in my '67 Chrysler in the winter. What will I do? Since I cannot know when I will be going, I cannot begin to look for a job, but I do know I will not be in work for the blind (after working for and with Mr. Jernigan fifteen years could I do similar work under anyone else? No.).

I have a lifetime certificate as a librarian in Washington. Perhaps I will pass my real estate exam there and sell houses. Perhaps I will open my used book store (a dream I have long had). Perhaps I will combine these activities.

Over the years I have become close to so many NFBers! I have come to love so many! You in the Movement are splendid people, and whatever the future holds, my attitudes, my philosophy, my memories are

unalterably tied to Mr. Jernigan and our great cause. Even as I sit on the edge of the stream, I'll be tempted to flick my oar in now and again.

Thank you all for being my friends. □

NAC GETS LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE: MISSISSIPPI STYLE

BY
ROBERT R. SIBLEY

MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, MAY 19, 1975

TO: ALL WORKSHOPS AFFILIATED WITH NIB
AND OTHERS

This letter is not meant to be critical of any workshop that is associated with NAC, but merely to give you my personal opinion of NAC and let you know the progress we have made in the past eighteen months at Mississippi Industries for the Blind *without* any help from NAC.

First, I would like to say that all workshops should have standards, but these standards should be set by the General Council of Workshops and it should be the responsibility of NIB (National Industries for the Blind) to see that the standards are met, at no cost to the shops. It is hard enough for a blind or handicapped shop to make enough money to pay people a decent wage as it is without having to pay NAC, or some other accrediting organization, to tell us how to run our business, when ninety-nine percent of them can't even run their own businesses.

A lot of the standards that NAC requires are not fair. It is impossible for the workshops to do some of them and a lot of the time the educational standards are too high. For example, I think we have the best trainers, production manager, office help, et cetera, as you can find in the world, but some of them have only a high school education or less; but I don't think a person with a

doctor's degree could do a better job than they are doing. As a matter of fact, I do not have a college degree.

I have talked to a lot of the other blind shops that feel the same as I do, but most of them are afraid to speak out because they are afraid of not getting a contract from the Federal Government or are afraid of what NAC may be able to do to them. In other words, NAC has been forced down the throats of many of the shops because they were afraid not to be accredited. To me, NAC is just a bunch of bureaucrats trying to justify their existence.

Listed below are a few of the reasons I feel that all workshops should disassociate themselves from NAC:

1. NAC is not needed because of standards set by HEW.
2. The certification program of the General Council of Workshops is or should be superior since it is handled by a committee more likely to be familiar with standards needed in workshops.
3. Counting the on-site visits plus annual membership, the cost is already over \$1000 a year to a shop of any size. Discussions have already begun to substantially increase this charge, and if NAC ever reaches its announced goal of controlling flow of Federal funds—the sky is the limit. This would be costly to the workshops and would probably be to NIB's disadvantage, as the combined take most likely would be considerable.

4. As most blind clients who are informed object to NAC, controversy between blind employees and shop must eventually result.

5. NAC standards do not provide for reasonable blind employee participation as is done at MIB. This again will result in conflict between employee and shop as blind people become more conscious of their rights.

6. Even though NAC does not now have the power to control Federal funds or contracts, the control of Federal funds is an announced goal.

7. NAC's standards mean nothing, as they will do nothing to enforce them—not even actually investigate documented complaints. The *Kettner* case is only one of many.

8. NAC turned down the agreement approved by the General Council in Miami and by the NIB Board later. It appears that the other parties should have turned it down anyway, but it's living proof that NAC does not intend to work in good faith with the General Council of Workshops.

9. NAC has accredited some agencies which are widely believed to be among the poorest in the Nation—apparently to help itself, not the clients nor agencies.

10. NAC promotes custodial care and disregards the true best interest of blind people.

11. NAC has consistently refused to even negotiate in good faith, much less work with the consumer.

12. NAC has consistently (with few exceptions) refused to permit representatives of the organized blind on their board until recently, and then did it in a manner contrary to the recommendation of its own committee.

13. NAC chooses to wage war on blind people, and so long as this posture is maintained, it will be immersed in controversy. Why should any workshop voluntarily in-

volve itself in this controversy when it is not necessary?

14. HEW has withdrawn Federal financial support. The William Bingham Foundation withdrew its financial support from NAC on May 6.

15. Some of NAC's officers have publicly stated that blind people do not have the ability to teach or run their own business.

16. The only official recognition remaining to NAC is the Office of Education of HEW, listing it as an accrediting agency for residential schools for the blind. Since state or regional accrediting agencies are available for practically all of these schools, even this listing is expected to be withdrawn before long.

17. NAC has not accredited any new agencies since May, 1974, that I know of, and obviously doesn't expect to until its next board meeting, which is not scheduled until November, 1975.

18. Just recently Maryland Industries for the Blind became the second agency to withdraw within the last few months.

The reason I am giving you the progress we have made at Mississippi Industries for the Blind in the past eighteen months is to show that it is not necessary to be accredited by NAC to make a success of a workshop.

I took the position as Executive Director at MIB on September 4, 1973. Management and labor were at each other's throat, due to the fact that management did not understand the problems of labor and labor did not understand the problems of management.

Production was down all through the plant. Morale was at an all-time low. To correct this, I knew I had to get management and labor working together, so I came up with the idea of a Grievance Committee.

We have six departments at MIB, so I got each Supervisor to let his department

have a free election and elect two blind members from each department as representatives. These twelve people meet with me once a month to discuss their problems and ideas how MIB should be run and any problems they may have with supervisors, working conditions, piece rate, wages, fringe benefits, and so on, and, of course, any problems that I have pertaining to MIB I discuss with them and try to work out a satisfactory arrangement. The things we discuss never get back to the supervisors, so they feel free in saying whatever they want to. The first few meetings we had would last from two to four hours, but after a few months, our meetings now only last from thirty minutes to an hour.

A lot of progress that has been made at MIB over the last eighteen months has been due to the success of the Grievance Committee. Before I make any major decision, I always discuss it with the committee and they help me relay this to the rest of the employees. Most of the things this committee asks for I am able to do because they rarely ever ask for anything that is not within reason.

Since this committee started we have increased our production in every department from eighteen to fifty-two percent, with the same amount of help. The morale is now at an all-time high. Listed below is the progress we have made in the past eighteen months:

1. We have cut our administrative payroll by \$97,000 a year.
2. We now require our office and administrative help to work eight hours a day instead of the seven they had been working in the past.
3. We have installed an inventory control system.
4. We have installed a cost accounting system.

5. We have brought MIB from a losing company to a profit-making company.
6. We have brought the average wage from \$1.66 an hour to \$3.04.
7. We have built approximately 16,000 square feet to the warehouse.
8. We have brought our sales up more than \$1,500,000 a year.
9. We have brought our fringe benefits up to the best in the Nation:

	1973	1974
Vacation	10 days	15 days
Sick leave	0 days	15 days
Holidays	6 days	12 days
Insurance-hospitalization	Paid in full	Paid in full
Life insurance	one-half	one-half
Retirement	Company 5%	Company 5%
	Employee 5%	Employee 5%

10. We have made MIB one of the number one workshops in the world.
11. We arranged to get a cafeteria that we had been working on for over a year.
12. We have had a blind Outreach Worker on our payroll for over a year. He has made a lot of progress in assisting blind to come to work at MIB. In the last eleven months, he has managed to get twenty-four blind people to come to work. Our Outreach Worker works with all the rehabilitation counselors all over the State of Mississippi. His duties also consist of making talks to Lions Clubs and other civic organizations, helping to secure adequate housing and transportation to and from work.
13. We have done away with our special certificate and we are now paying at least the minimum hourly rate to everyone, including our trainees.
14. We have now designated a training area

in our plant and set up machinery on which to train new trainees. We think this will be better than putting them into direct production to begin with. We already have the necessary trainers to provide this service.

15. The First National Bank is coming out to MIB on Friday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. to cash checks and provide services to the blind people.
16. We are trying to promote more and more blind people to white-collar and better paying jobs. In the last year we have hired one blind Outreach Worker, one blind social worker, and one totally blind maintenance supervisor, and our plans are, if our binder project and sponge project go through, to promote two blind people to supervisory positions.
17. From July 1, 1973, through June 30, 1974, we trained 37 clients, and for the first nine months of this year, we have already trained 41 clients.
18. We are striving to provide a more comprehensive facility program at MIB in the way of training, work experience, and provide space to evaluate the clients' progress in order to improve the services at MIB, but, it is still my personal opinion that the best way to rehabilitate a person is to provide him with a job and pay him a living wage, and he will rehabilitate himself.
19. Three months ago, we, the committee, decided that we had very few grievances any more and that we should change the name from the Grievance Committee to the Executive Committee since most of the problems we have now are related to policy-making decisions.
20. Our plant size is approximately 200,000 square feet. We work 326 people—186 of these are blind, legally or totally, 23 are commercially blind, and 13 have

other handicaps. The remainder are all sighted. Last year, we did better than \$6,000,000 in sales and should exceed \$8,000,000 this year. Our entire plant is air-conditioned with the exception of the mattress shop and warehouse. We also furnish free transportation to and from the doctor's office, social security office, welfare office, et cetera, for blind people at no cost to them, and they are not docked for this.

21. We were able to get the Legislature to pass a use law requiring other State agencies to purchase products we produce if we are competitive. This alone produced approximately \$250,000 in sales last year.
22. We are close to having our sponge project in operation, which is a good profit item.
23. Within the next calendar year, we should have our binder project off the ground, along with the duffel bag project.
24. By the end of this fiscal year, we should be doing twice the business we are now doing.
25. We now have eight commercial salesmen on the road. We have increased the size of our territories and our sales are up forty-two percent.
26. AND, WE DID ALL OF THIS WITHOUT ANY HELP FROM NAC!

After reading this letter, I think you will see that all it takes to have a successful workshop is hard work and good planning, and if we all work together and support each other and work close with NIB, there is no limit to how far we can go, but I am afraid if we associate ourselves with NAC, our growth will stop and we will not be able to pay blind people a living wage. □

Sincerely,

ROBERT R. SIBLEY

Executive Director

PIKES AND OTHER ROADS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BY
FLORENCE GRANNIS

There are two Multi-State Service Centers for libraries for the blind now, one for the Southeastern part of the United States and the other for some of the Western States.

Multi-State Service Centers have been designed to fill the need for a decentralized, broad-range network structure. Such centers should function as materials-support units for a specified geographical area of approximately thirteen states. Four centers were originally envisioned. Working with the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress on a contractual basis and relating directly to the regional libraries in its service area, each center (1) houses and lends all materials available in the national program; (2) acts as a focal point for volunteer production of material in its area; (3) maintains and circulates "special" collections of lesser-used materials, including back issues of magazines, cassette, and braille books selected for the National Collections program, and books produced by volunteers in its area; (4) stores and lends sound reproducers and allied equipment as well as furnishing replacement parts and back-up repair service for these same items; and (5) houses and ships nationally produced program promotional material such as brochures and catalogs.¹

Mr. Jernigan has shared with me a letter he received recently relating to the Florida Multi-State Center.

May 21, 1975

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: A part of Mr. Gashel's testimony concerning the budget request of the Division for the Blind and

Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress was a statement of opposition to the funding and concept of Multi-State Centers. Since the Alabama Library has received considerable service from the Daytona Center, I would appreciate your reaction to my following comments.

The Division has relatively little control over the facilities of its network libraries. After they are approved they may be neglected by their state administration until they are unable to develop an adequate collection. Indeed, on several occasions, I have been told to make the books fit the shelves. An order which I interpreted to mean discard even useful books if there were no available shelves. Now that Alabama is in the Multi-State area, I can offer excess books to Daytona and if their supply is adequate for a particular title, I can cut down my holdings with the assurance that I can still borrow the book if an Alabama reader requires it. In this manner, I emptied five hundred feet of shelving containing back issues of magazines.

When we found our open reel tapes were mildewing in cardboard boxes, Daytona located three thousand surplus containers which we use to package the tapes for use in the library and in the mail.

In fact, the only request which Daytona has not filled was for CBA² books which have not been sent from the National Collection.

Certainly every state should have a facility adequate to develop all the material provided by the Library of Congress and volunteers in the area as well, but if such a facility is not presently available and consumer organizations are unable to generate

the necessary legislation to provide an adequate facility in time to save the older less used parts of the collection, it is helpful from the viewpoint of the librarian to have a center like Daytona to depend upon.

Sincerely,
CRAWFORD PIKE
Librarian

cc: Mr. Frank Cylke
Mr. Euclid Raines

What an unfortunate situation and what a questionable route for correction!

Mr. Pike is behaving as one of the havenot nations who does not want to stir its bones to create its own haves, it simply wants a free ride on "big brother!" Why should the administrators of his library furnish him with decent space, decent staff, decent funding, when they can freeloader on Florida?

On the other hand, the Alabama blind are less likely to rise up and demand a decent library collection and decent service if they are told "keep your cool—we don't have what you want but no doubt big brother will provide." Big brother *is* a good guy (or should we say big sister since Mrs. Kathy Jackson is the very able administrator of the Multi-Center?). But, it is not the same. Alabama should have its own good library! Mr. Pike's staff should push for it, all Alabama's readers and potential readers should push. Rise up, you book deprived! All you have to lose is your "sorry, not available" cards!

While we are discussing lacks and losses, let us consider some other exchanges of correspondence.

March 7, 1975

MR. FRANK KURT CYLKE, CHIEF
*Division for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped*

*The Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.*

DEAR MR. CYLKE: We are pleased to see that the Talking Book Topics is once again being issued in print. Many of our borrowers have missed having the print copy. The January-February issue we have received does not have an order blank in it. Are the borrowers supposed to use the order blank that comes with the disc copy? If so, will each borrower be sent both a print and disc copy at the same time? Which version is being mailed to new library borrowers? The card we send to the American Foundation does not provide for a choice and in most instances we would not know which format the new borrower would prefer. A little clarification on this would be appreciated.

A number of our borrowers have contacted us about the signal that is given at the beginning and end of each side of the newer recorded books. Many have indicated that they find it annoying to listen to. What purpose does the signal serve? Is it for timing the forty-five minutes recording time on each side?

Sincerely yours,
(MRS.) FLORENCE GRANNIS
Librarian

MRS. FLORENCE GRANNIS
*Librarian
Commission for the Blind
Des Moines, Iowa*

DEAR MRS. GRANNIS: Thank you for your letter of March 7. We, too, are pleased to be producing *Talking Book Topics* in print once again. An order form is provided in the March-April issue of *Talking Book Topics*. Readers who receive the print copy now also receive the recorded version, and may have the choice as to the order form used. Cards for new readers which are returned to

the American Foundation for the Blind; for both *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review* are now being revised to indicate format choices.

The addition of the 400 Hertz tone at the end of the recording track was due to a number of borrower requests for a signal indicating that the end of the track had been reached as a reminder during late night reading to turn the machine off in order that it would not inadvertently run all night. The tone addition at the beginning is used as a beginning of track information for duplication purposes.

Sincerely,
CHARLES GALLOZZI
Assistant Chief

April 22, 1975

MR. CHARLES GALLOZZI
Assistant Chief
Division for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
The Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. GALLOZZI: Thank you for your undated letter which was received here April 8, 1975. I appreciate your answer to my questions, but I must say that I object to having the 400 Hertz tone at the end of the recording track. As you know, we all get a good many crackpot requests. If we are going to have such a tone to awaken the borrowers at the end of the records, maybe we should be petitioning TV stations to put some kind of a beep at the end of their programs so people won't leave the tube on. It is wasteful of our energies, you know!

Please reconsider this procedure.

Sincerely yours,
(MRS.) FLORENCE GRANNIS
Librarian

April 3, 1975

MR. FRANK KURT CYLKE, CHIEF
Division for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
The Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. CYLKE: I am very troubled to find that the introduction which has been customary for the Talking Books since the beginning of Talking Book production giving reasonably complete bibliographic information, that is: Title; author; publisher; copyright (date) by (publisher's name); recorded in (number) records; for the Library of Congress in the studios of; date; read by (narrator's name), is now being omitted and we have instead: Buzz; side 1; title; author.

Will you please tell me the reason for this change? Unless there is some factor which is not apparent to me, it appears that the blind readers are being deprived of significant information that they would have if they were not blind and were reading an ordinary printed book.

One of my quarrels with commercial spoken word recordings has been that adequate bibliographic information was not generally presented. Let us not fall into this sloppy procedure! I believe we cannot reinforce too often the fact that we are dealing with *books*. The fact that they are spoken instead of printed should make no difference in our thoroughness as librarians.

Sincerely yours,
(MRS.) FLORENCE GRANNIS
Assistant Director in charge
of Library and Social Services

April 9, 1975

DEAR FLORENCE: It is true that the information you mentioned is no longer at the

beginning of books. The bibliographic information still appears—produced by the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped—but at the end of the book. This change was effective as of July 1, 1974, and was in response to reader requests to shorten the amount of time required to get to the text. This allows bibliographic listings and information about the author (if available) to be placed in context. We believe the interest of the reader is being served by this method. The procedure is in line with the narration criteria recently forwarded to the National Federation of the Blind for tape mastering processes.

I appreciate your inquiry.

Sincerely yours,
FRANK KURT CYLKE
Chief

These speak for themselves. Patronizing, custodializing.

Maybe a print book could have a horn built in or an electric shock so its reader couldn't doze off (though—could it be—one of the reader's rights is to doze off?). □

FOOTNOTES

1. U. S., Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, *Regional Library Manual*, October, 1974, III., B., p. 1.
2. CBA Books produced by volunteers on cassette for the Library of Congress and available only through them—not through regional libraries.

SUBREGIONALS, MULTISTATE CENTERS, AND OTHER MATTERS

BY

CARL SANDSTEDT

(Note: The following letter from Carl Sandstedt to Jim Gashel expresses a different view from that held by Mrs. Grannis concerning multistate centers and subregional libraries for the blind. Mr. Sandstedt is Librarian of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, State Department of Education. He is also Chairman of the Southern Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.)

June 4, 1975

MR. JAMES GASHEL

National Federation of the Blind
Du Pont Circle Building, Suite 212
1346 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

DEAR JIM:

I wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed your speech at the NFB-G convention in Macon. Perceptions of the blind by the sighted community, and perceptions of the blind by themselves, are all too often filled with the grossest sort of mythology. If our subregionalization program has accom-

plished one thing, it has been to bring the blind into the political mainstream of decision making as far as public library services in Georgia are concerned. Three years ago when I first came to Georgia, I used to cringe upon hearing lines like: "Money's tight but the Library for the Blind is the last thing that will ever be discontinued." This was simply a conceptualization of the service as the state library's charity case. That isn't the case today, primarily because the blind in Georgia are playing a part in both supplying and consuming library services at local level and political power on the local level can have a rippling effect at all levels. I would say that the perception of the blind and handicapped person as tax-paying responsible citizen is stronger at all levels in Georgia libraries, both within the state library agency and within the community library than almost any other state in the country, and it is the concept of subregionalization and the support of the NFB

in Georgia that has largely brought this about.

I recently read your testimony on behalf of the LC budget and your opposition to both multi-state centers and projected books. At the recent Southern Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Handicapped meeting, support for the concept of multi-state centers was unanimous. I believe that your objections to multi-state centers on the grounds of responsibility to the patrons were wrong primarily because the MSC's were established to provide *back-up* services to and *through* established regional libraries. To criticize the concept because of diluted responsibility would be to ignore all the major trends in interstate compacting within the last ten years. An analogy would be the local opposition to regionalization of public libraries that occasionally developed during that movement in the sixties. I believe that many doubters at that time saw that establishment of regional libraries served to strengthen services at the community level without any lessening of local control. The program for the blind and physically handicapped is growing at a rate at which the present organizational levels will have trouble keeping up with demand. I believe that the Southern multi-state center is proving itself as a necessary component to the delivery of effective library services at the regional level.

The area of projected books is one of which I cannot claim universal support within the Conference. One of the regional librarians feels much the same as you do on the matter and no motion in support of

this concept was even mentioned during the meeting. Nevertheless, I must agree with the point mentioned by LC that there are a significant minority of readers who because of auditory loss and physical handicaps cannot use the present service and who are denied services to which they are entitled through law. Also, as a librarian, I have always accepted the idea that the medium that the material is in should be of little or no import except for certain inherent features which must be built into the delivery or storage system. It is precisely for this reason of media parochialism, that thousands of public librarians have not been conditioned to think of talking books as books or talking book readers in their community as tax-paying library users, that has kept the program for the blind and handicapped in the sorry state from which it is only now emerging.

I hope you can tour our library if you're ever in or passing through Atlanta. We have regular workshops on library services to the blind and handicapped and would like to have you participate in one of these. If your time schedule is tight, we now have a nation-wide WATS service which can be combined with an amplifier on our end. We tried this last winter with Ed Lewis of LC and it seemed to work okay although, of course, it wasn't as good as being an in-person participant.

Best regards,

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE OF LIBRARIANS FOR
THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

□

LIBRARIANS READ OUT NAC

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE OF LIBRARIANS FOR
THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED
Atlanta, Georgia

RESOLUTION NUMBER 75-3: STANDARDS

We, the members of the Southern Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, assembled at the Second Biennial Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 23, 1975, encourage the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, with regional and subregional library, as well as consumer participation, to

develop quantitative minimum support standards for regional and subregional libraries. As a start, our assembly recommends adoption of ALA minimum per capita standards for public library service. Funding and staffing standards should be based on the total blind and physically handicapped eligible population.

We do not feel that the existing NAC standards are relevant to present day library service, which has advanced greatly since NAC Standards were published almost ten years ago. Passed unanimously. □

NO-NAC RULE IN CALIFORNIA

BY
PERRY SUNDQUIST

Editor's Note: Perry Sundquist, as president of the National Federation of the Blind of California, presented the following statement before the Advisory Committee on Services to the Blind and Partially Sighted, California State Department of Rehabilitation, June 5, 1975.

Mr. Chairman, since you have been gracious enough to invite me to be your guest at this meeting, I certainly would not wish to say anything which would abuse this privilege. But since this committee is discussing accreditation, may I speak to a very serious problem which we have with the department on this issue?

For the past twenty years or so, there has been a constant friction between the NFB of California and the department. This has been marked by strikes, picketing, and frequent violent confrontations before legislative committees. This simmered down more than two years ago with the appoint-

ment of a Program Manager for Services for the Blind and this Advisory Committee. However, we both bear our legislative scars.

There is, however, one really tough problem existing now between the National Federation of the Blind of California and the Department of Rehabilitation. That concerns Robert Wolfe's directive of February 10, 1975, requiring all blind agencies in the State which seek funds from the department for training purposes be certified by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). In our very vigorous protest to Mr. Wolfe on February 22, 1975, we pointed out what a very dismal track record NAC has established over the past ten years and that its practices are anathema to most of the organized blind in the Fifty States. In a letter to me dated March 11, 1975, Mr. Alan C. Nelson stated that the department was modifying this policy. Since Al Nelson had already resigned as Director of

the Department of Rehabilitation at that time, on April 10 I wrote Steven Y'Barra, Assistant to the Secretary of the Health and Welfare Agency and in direct charge of the Department of Rehabilitation, pointing out that this modification was entirely unsatisfactory to us and, in fact, was quite meaningless. I sent the acting director a copy of that letter.

Let me now briefly recount what has happened to NAC since Mr. Wolfe's unfortunate directive. The Mississippi Social Welfare Board voted to withdraw from NAC, as did the Maryland Workshop and Industries for the Blind. The president of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, Mr. Burt Risley, Director of the Texas Commission for the Blind, recently wrote a letter to NAC saying that he would not seek to have the Texas Commission for the Blind accredited and that he would not ask any private agencies in his State to seek NAC accreditation. In a letter dated February 18, 1975 to NAC, Dr. Andrew Adams, Federal Commissioner of Rehabilitation, withdrew all HEW grants from NAC. Finally, the prestigious William Bingham Foundation of Columbus, Ohio, decided not to make a continuing \$10,000 grant to NAC on May 5, 1975.

As I wrote to the Executive Director of NAC (published in the May 1975 issue of the *Braille Monitor*) "The blind of the country are thoroughly knowledgeable and determined concerning NAC. Despite any protestations to the contrary, they know that NAC is dying. In fact, the final curtain on the NAC story is coming down. It

only remains to be seen whether NAC will go gracefully or end in the same manner in which it began."

I know that the Acting Director of the Department of Rehabilitation is working on this most serious problem, and we all devoutly hope that he will be successful in solving it by the issuance of the department's memo of June 2, 1975.

I cannot close without expressing my warm admiration and deep affection for Acting Director Harry Towne. He and I were colleagues in the State Department of Social Welfare more than ten years ago, he as Associate Counsel and I as Chief of the Division for the Blind. I have so much confidence in Mr. Towne's basic integrity that I, as president of the National Federation of the Blind of California, recommended to the Governor that he be appointed Director of the Department of Rehabilitation. What more can I say? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In a Department of Rehabilitation Memorandum dated June 2, 1975, to all Regional Administrators, District Administrators, and Program Managers, the department completely rescinded its directive of February 10, 1975, which required all blind agencies in the State which seek funds from the department for training purposes to be certified by NAC. Instead, the department now will develop its own guidelines or standards for these agencies with the active participation of the members of the Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted. □

NAC, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND THE TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

The Tennessee School for the Blind stands well up among the better institutions for the education of blind children in the country. It has a good academic program and a high percentage of its students go on to college. The vocational education program is developing without undue emphasis on the traditional crafts and trades usually associated with the blind. The students learn Braille, typing, and generally how to handle various kinds of standard office equipment. All students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities.

But, blind children are the victims when educators are subject to the vagaries of political elections. When politics directly affects the relationships of administrators there is more likelihood that difficulties will arise. The tendency in those circumstances is that the contenders look for and emphasize their differences—political, educational, philosophical—and the blind children in the school system are the losers. When NAC is added to the mix, the expected obfuscation makes it more difficult to keep the real issues in proper perspective.

Tennessee schools are governed by a twelve-member State Board of Education. The Commissioner of Education who serves as chairman of the State Board of Education, is a political appointee. Until the creation of the State Board of Regents in 1972, the governance of the State's institutions of higher learning received the major share of the attention of the Board of Education. Problems of special minority groups, such as the blind, got scant notice, except when it came to politics. The administrators of the blind school are political appointees, and the superintendent serves at the pleasure of the Board of Education.

In 1974 the Republicans lost the election.

Consequently, administrative holdovers in the education system became fair game. This meant that the positions of superintendent and assistant superintendent were targets for change despite the fact that the occupants were fully qualified academically and had been in the system long enough to acquire tenure. Also in 1972, the State Legislature adopted laws to implement the Federal mandate that all children, and especially the severely handicapped, are entitled to educational opportunities. The enactment of such legislation gave new emphasis to special education.

The Superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Blind, Clay Coble, and Anthony Cobb, Assistant Superintendent, have proper credentials for their jobs but hold no special education certificates. Principal Gary Coker has a master's degree and some other graduate work in peripatology (mobility training). All three have been at the school for a number of years. During the last couple of years or so, differences arose between Superintendent Coble and Principal Coker about administration and scheduling to the point that the principal eventually refused directives from the administration. It was not long before the school—staff, students, parents, and administration—were polarized. Matters reached a point where it was impossible to operate effectively. Given the political posture of the Board of Education, the situation at the school was made to order.

At a meeting of the Board of Education on May 9, Commissioner Sam Ingram announced that because of unresolvable personality and education conflicts at the school, Superintendent Coble, Assistant Superintendent Cobb, and Principal Coker were all to be relieved of their positions as

of July 1. All three were fired because it was felt that a new superintendent should not be burdened with administrative staff at odds with each other and, in addition, should be free to choose his own team. Mr. Coble would be found a new position within the State Department of Education. Because Mr. Cobb was closely identified with Mr. Coble, he would have to go elsewhere. The Board of Education, faced with placing another tenured member, simply abolished the job of assistant superintendent; thus, they thought relieving themselves of any responsibility for Mr. Cobb. Principal Coker was put on probation. There was no notice nor were any hearings held.

These actions by the board, widely reported in the press, further polarized everyone involved. A surge of support for Mr. Coker was generated among parents and students at the school. As a consequence, the Board of Education at its June 6 meeting took actions which it said were "to clarify the position taken by the board." The transfer of Superintendent Coble to another position was confirmed and he will receive another appointment—to be made by the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Cobb's position is abolished. Mr. Coker will remain in the school system as a teacher of special education. One Board of Education member is reported as having said, "They were not fired, only removed from their present positions." This latter stand is taken undoubtedly in an effort to protect the Board of Education from charges of dismissal of tenured employees without the due process provided in the system. Mr. Cobb has brought such a suit.

Cobb contends that he was fired because he was appointed assistant superintendent by a Republican administration, though he has been in the educational system for more than ten years. Political considerations

aside, the fact that there were neither notice nor hearings is grounds for a suit. There are a number of other charges as well.

The Tennessee School for the Blind is accredited by the Southeastern Association of Colleges and Elementary Schools. That body felt that the hasty actions of the Board of Education were grounds for it to conduct an investigation and one is now underway. As a consequence, the school for the blind accreditation as an educational institution may be in jeopardy.

However, accreditation by recognized authorities is not sufficient if the institution is a school for the blind, and the Tennessee school carries the burden of NAC accreditation. Early this year, a NAC on-site review team did a five-year reevaluation. How objective was this review? Looking only at NAC's survey of the school's present programs and the recommendations about them which it made, one might almost conclude that an effort was made to deal with the subject matter strictly related to the educational program for the blind. But NAC could not resist taking a hand in the political and administrative problems then existing and inserted a number of statements about it in the report which seem to approve the political actions of the State Board of Education.

Early in the report, after listing improvements since the 1970 on-site review such as increase in the number of qualified staff, improvement in salary schedules, development of an "outstanding instructional materials center," and the like, the team makes mention of the problems among the personnel and urges that people trained in special education replace those without such certification. It then imperiously commands that *"Immediate steps be taken to resolve the conflict within the administrative staff of the school in order that services to blind*

children may proceed without further impairment." [italics in the original].

The report of the on-site review team is a lengthy reassessment of matters both important and unimportant, without much distinction between them as far as emphasis is concerned. The report was received by the school administrators on March 29, 1975, and, in accordance with NAC standards, comments about it by the school staff were to be in NAC's hands "not later than fifteen days following mailing date of the draft report;" (a rather strange demand since the agency or school involved pays the expenses of the team). Each department had a committee to review the criticisms and comments and recommendations about its area of activity in the school. Each committee then had to write a critique of the NAC review about its department, and the administration then had to put it all together—a large order in a short period of time since other activities at the school continued as usual. Such departmental responses as could be prepared within the time allotted were incorporated in a letter from Superintendent Coble to Huesten Collingwood of NAC. Many NAC recommendations were accepted; exceptions were taken to a number of others. The objectivity of the whole review team was questioned by Mr. Coble in the letter to Mr. Collingwood as follows:

It is unfortunate that the committee chose to draw attention to the matter of administrative differences in the form of a major recommendation if it was not in turn willing to be specific. In other words, the committee seems to have asked, "How long is a short piece of rope?" As is, the recommendation is of almost no assistance to the staff other than those who are gratified to think that it will materially aid in advancing their private causes.

It is also extremely significant, and dis-

appointing as well, that the team did not even contact Mr. Cobb, a key administrative staff member who has been assistant superintendent since August of 1972. Perhaps this was by design and no doubt was preferred by those staff members who did have private evening contacts with individual team members at the motel during the review and apparently saw fit to make additional contacts after the visit through telephone calls and newspaper clippings. Similar arrangements appear to have been made in two other recent cases, more than likely because it is felt Mr. Cobb has too intimate knowledge of many facets of these administrative conflicts and has adequate proof to support his views. The latter are very damaging to the spurious and ill-informed reasoning of the unrepresentative sampling of staff opinion which obviously skewed portions of the team's report.

At my request, Mr. Cobb has supplied the following observations on the report for inclusion in this letter:

Having now read the entire report, I can see how the team completely missed the connection between apparently unrelated issues. Despite a good deal of rationalization to the contrary, the hesitancy covering the student activity building, for example, appears little more than a reflection of the antipathy of a few for a particular staff member, whose personal building—by some giant leaps of logic—this has come to be considered.

The simple fact is that all current disharmony at this school ultimately reduces to two tangible factors: (1) the personal resentment of staff members who have failed to receive positions for which they have applied (especially as their bitterness has spread to others); and (2) the irrational antipathy mentioned above, which seems to have deep emotional roots embedded in gos-

sip and misinformation. Ultimately these two may in turn reflect a more general philosophical split within the education profession between generalists and specialists. Local personalities, however, have given our manifestations a distinctively bitter flavor of their own, which I noticed very soon after arriving on this campus in August of 1972. I would assume any of the team members who had cared to spend even a few minutes glancing at some of the documentation for these observations would have sensed the roots of the "conflict within the administrative staff."

Almost anyone would admit that most of these things are difficult to justify professionally: (1) a charge that someone's not getting what he wanted constituted "political interference"; (2) continued refusal to abide by inhouse and state procedures; (3) outright evasions or circumventions of reasonable directions; and (4) failure to display consistency between administrative roles and those held in professional associations. Some have been ludicrous, for example, a resolution on "complete freedom of communication" debated and passed by five or six people meeting in secret. One who has no knowledge of these matters cannot possibly assess the nature of the conflict, much less suggest an effective cure.

Finally, we wish to respond to principal suggestion A on page 6 of the team's report by way of indicating our compliance with it. Within two hours following the exit interview with Mr. Overbeay, appropriate authorities were contacted and development of this project was halted. Following receipt of your letter of February 19, 1975, we immediately established the mechanism for taking a vote from our staff concerning the construction of this building. The results were as follows:

	<i>Instructional Staff</i>	<i>General Service Staff*</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>
For construction of student activity building at TSB	22 (42%)	80 (98%)	102 (76%)
Oppose construction of student activity building at TSB	31 (58%)	2 (2%)	33 (24%)

* Houseparents, medical and recreational personnel included here

With the passing of these results to the Department of Education in a letter of March 7, 1975, it seems to me that we have partially fulfilled the request to give "most serious reconsideration" to the project. The final decision now rests with our board and its chairman as to whether this \$550,000 will be completely lost to the school or whether we will in fact construct this building with its great amount of flexible space for many possible future uses. In that regard, it is absolutely incredible that no member of the on-site team even asked for a brief review of the drawings, which would have shown instantly the potential for vocational and prevocational training and many other uses to which this space could be adapted in addition to leisure and recreational activities. It is disappointing that here, again, information obtained from unofficial sources was preferred to fact which could easily have been supplied by the administrative staff if only they had been requested.

These observations represent a great deal of careful consideration by many people. It is for this reason we respectfully share them with you.

Yours very truly,
CLAY COBLE
Superintendent

Let it here be noted that the Board of Education did not accept NAC's advice on the building of a student activity center and that project is moving ahead.

As a result of the reply of the staff of the Tennessee School for the Blind to the on-site review team's report, NAC has put the school on notice that unless its demands for more staff trained in special education are met, it will withdraw accreditation. That notification was contained in a letter to Superintendent Coble from Jack W. Birch, chairperson of NAC's Commission on Accreditation, to which the school administration made proper reply.

New York, New York, June 7, 1975

DEAR MR. COBLE: The Commission on Accreditation to the National Accreditation Council, at its meeting on May 29, 1975, requested that the Tennessee School for the Blind show cause by October 31, 1975, why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. The Commission was mindful of the actions taken by the Tennessee State Board of Education on May 9, 1975, as reported in your letter dated May 22, 1975, which stated:

- "a. The current Superintendent be relieved of his duties effective July 1, 1975.
- b. The position of Assistant Superintendent be abolished effective July 1, 1975.
- c. The current Principal be relieved of his duties effective July 1, 1975."

The commission was concerned particularly about the qualifications of the top administrative staff who are directly responsible for services to children in that these individuals should have specific training and/or experience in education of visually handicapped children. This concern was addressed in the principal suggestion designated H in the report of the NAC reassessment team which visited the school in February 1975 and reads as follows:

H. For purposes of future recruitment, the school take the initiative in cooper-

ation with appropriate state officials to reexamine the qualification of administrative positions with direct responsibilities for services to children to introduce requirements of appropriate experience and professional preparation in education of the visually handicapped.

The foregoing suggestion was found to apply specifically to the following positions:

- a. The chief executive or administrative staff member, that is, the superintendent or director;
- b. The assistant executive or administrative staff member who is in charge of instruction, that is, the principal; and
- c. The assistant executive or administrative staff member who is in charge of home life, that is, the director of student life.

In showing cause why accreditation should not be withdrawn, the commission requested that the school superintendent or other, higher authorized state official, submit the following documentation:

- 1. The official, written qualifications and job descriptions for each of the three above-mentioned positions;
- 2. The credentials of the new chief executive or administrative staff member; or
- 3. The credentials of the other two above mentioned as assistant executive staff members.

It is requested that the documentation called for in the foregoing item number one be submitted as soon as practicable. Based on such documentation and other reports pertinent to the qualifications of the top administrative staff as may be received by October 31, 1975, the commission, at its next meeting in the fall, may take one of the following actions:

- I. Reaccredit the Tennessee School for

the Blind for a specified period of time;

- II. Upon request, and at the discretion of the commission, extend the period of time during which the school may show cause why accreditation should not be withdrawn.
- III. Withdraw accreditation in accordance with its *Policies*.

In the meantime, accreditation remains in effect. If the commission decides to withdraw accreditation, the school may appeal this decision as provided by the commission's *Policies*. An additional copy of these *Policies* will be furnished upon request if the one we sent to you earlier is not conveniently available.

The commission looks forward to receiving evidence of the employment of a well qualified top administrative staff for the Tennessee School for the Blind. It is the intent of the commission's actions to support successful recruitment efforts which will improve the services provided to the blind children and youth enrolled in the school.

If there are any questions or if we may be helpful in details of reporting to the commission, we will be glad to hear from you.

JACK W. BIRCH, Ph.D.

Chairperson

Commission on Accreditation

cc: Mr. J. B. Whitman
Director of Special Schools
Tennessee State Department of
Education
Southern Association of Colleges and
Schools

Dr. O. C. Stewart, Chairperson
Tennessee State Secondary Committee

Dr. Ralph Evans, Chairperson
Elementary Committee
Tennessee State Elementary Committee

Mr. W. R. Goodson, Executive Secretary

Commission on Secondary Schools

Mr. Durell Ruffin, Executive Secretary
Commission on Elementary Schools

Donelson, Tennessee, June 11, 1975

DEAR DR. BIRCH: I have read your letter of June 7, 1975, to Mr. Coble regarding possible withdrawal of accreditation from the Tennessee School for the Blind. The reference to principal suggestion H in the report of the reassessment team and the application of that suggestion to three specific administrative positions I found both interesting and appalling.

Your suggestion, or rather *demand*, that the chief executive or administrative staff member possess formal academic credentials in education of the visually handicapped quite frankly strikes some of us practitioners as at best naive and at worst somewhat calculating. At the risk of being branded a presumptuous whippersnapper (a role to which I am not altogether unaccustomed), quite frankly I must believe your contention rests on (A) abysmal ignorance of the actual functions of the residential school superintendency in Tennessee if not elsewhere in the country, and/or (B) a vested interest on the part of those who train teachers of the visually handicapped in stipulating such requirements. In the last regard one can only speculate about the consequences if professional dietitians should take a leaf from your book and demand that all administrators in a residential school have dietetic training because we serve three meals a day.

It really should not be necessary to point out to you or your commission the differences between general administration and program administration directly involving curriculum and supervision. We at this school have

contended that the latter role quite naturally requires training in—well, curriculum and supervision. In our case familiarity with Braille and materials and methods for teaching visually limited students seems a logical further prerequisite. To insist, however, that the chief general administrator possess formal academic training in education of the visually handicapped suggests both waste of specialized training and the sort of patronizing attitude toward blind students which I hoped the profession was beginning to outgrow.

In all candor, this sort of clannishness on the part of special educators strikes me as a somewhat parochial arrogance toward generalists who can be of great benefit to programs for children who happen to have limited vision. If you will examine closely the role of the residential school superintendent, I think you will begin to see that there is basically little reason to require of him training different from that of other institutional administrators who also must depend upon the advice of program specialists on their staffs.

If the official position of the Council and its Commission on Accreditation consistently displays such insular attitudes, I can appreciate much more clearly the adamant opposition you are encountering from organizations like the National Federation of the Blind who wish to see the blind accepted as fully participating members of the community, not solely entrusted to those who know how to "deal with blind people."

Sincerely,

ANTHONY COBB

Assistant Superintendent

cc: Mr. J. B. Whitman
Dr. O. C. Stewart
Dr. W. R. Goodson

Dr. Ralph Evans
Mr. Durell Ruffin
Dr. Kenneth Jernigan

That the Tennessee School for the Blind needs more, not fewer, administrators with training in general education is well illustrated by a number of recommendations contained in NAC's report. One of them spells out rather clearly not only NAC's educational goals for the blind but what it thinks the blind are capable of doing:

Principal Suggestions:

In Assessing School Plans for Further Improvement, the Team Suggests that:

...

D. Major changes in curriculum be instituted to strengthen career education programming with particular attention to:

- 1) Close cooperation with the State Services for the Blind and other appropriate resources, to develop the pre-vocational, vocational and industrial arts programs so that a full schedule of opportunities is made available for students to gain skills in vocations such as piano tuning, business enterprises, small motor repair, medical transcription, and *others appropriate for Tennessee, and . . .* [italics supplied]

How's that for a forward-looking, modern program? If NAC is not careful, it might stumble into the 19th century. Shades of the Elizabethan Poor Law which tied the poor and disabled to the place of their birth.

The National Federation of the Blind can be very thankful that a number of its leaders who attended the Tennessee School for the Blind, including our illustrious President, managed to escape the tender ministrations of NAC. □

EYE OF NAC NO LONGER ON RFB

Editor's Note: The effort to have RFB give up its NAC accreditation continues, as the letters which follow indicate. The NAC symbol is composed of two stylized lines forming the outline of an eye. The pupil contains the letters N, A, C, made to conform to a rounded shape; above and below, in curved outline small print, are the words "National Accreditation Council," (above) and "Accredited Member," (below), giving an even greater impression of the eye's physical setting.

RECORDINGS FOR THE BLIND, INC.
New York, New York, May 23, 1975

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: As you may perhaps be aware, our Board of Directors took up the question of RFB's continued membership in the National Accreditation Council during the board's May 20 meeting. It was our understanding that if our board determined not to withdraw from the NAC, the NFB would boycott our services and picket our units commencing with the NFB's July Convention in Chicago.

We want to make it very clear that under these circumstances, there is no possibility that Recording for the Blind will accede to your demand that we withdraw from NAC.

Recording for the Blind is an organization of dedicated volunteers. We take great pride in our accomplishments in providing blind students with the educational tools so necessary to becoming self-sufficient citizens. On many occasions you yourself have indicated that we provide an important service.

During the course of our investigations we have become aware of a number of serious charges leveled at the NAC. Until we have had an opportunity to fully evaluate these charges, we are unable to draw any

conclusions on the merits of these charges. However, while we would not want it construed by the public that we either condone or condemn the NAC, these charges are sufficiently distressing that we have decided to remove the NAC seal from future RFB letterheads as soon as is practicably possible.

We intend to carry out a thorough reassessment of our position with the NAC. However, we cannot and will not do so under coercion or duress. When we are assured that an atmosphere conducive to calm reasoned deliberation has been established, we will be prepared to proceed with our reassessment.

Very truly yours,
JOHN W. CASTLES 3D
President

Des Moines, Iowa, June 2, 1975

DEAR MR. CASTLES: Your letter of May 23, 1975, is a strange one—one would almost be tempted to say a petulant one. You do not, you tell me, intend to be coerced by us; nor, I reply, do we intend to be coerced by you. Shall we shake hands on it?

You tell me that it is your "understanding" that we have indicated that we are going to do all sorts of dire things. It would be interesting to know how you arrived at those understandings and upon what foundation they are based.

As I say, your letter is a strange one. The NAC controversy has raged for years. During most of that time the blind, to my certain knowledge, have repeatedly tried to get Recording for the Blind to dissociate itself from NAC, pointing out NAC's unethical and unprofessional behavior and the harm it does to the blind. Mostly Recording for the Blind has seemed to refuse to listen. Under the circumstances it would not be

surprising if the Nation's blind should ultimately become impatient—especially since they have always had great respect for your organization.

Yet, with all of this background you blithely make the following statements:

During the course of our investigations we have become aware of a number of serious charges leveled at the NAC. Until we have had an opportunity to fully evaluate these charges, we are unable to draw any conclusions on the merits of these charges. However, while we would not want it construed by the public that we either condone or condemn the NAC, these charges are sufficiently distressing that we have decided to remove the NAC seal from future RFB letterheads as soon as is practicably possible.

Mr. Castles, one would think you had just now become aware of NAC for the first time—that you had only yesterday heard the charges and seen the evidence. The blind of the Nation will undoubtedly applaud your decision to remove the NAC symbol from your stationery—unless, that is, you decide it is not “practicably possible” month after month. You seem to be threatening us by saying that you will carry out your “reassessment” only when you are assured that an atmosphere “conducive to calm reasoned deliberation has been established.” If you are saying that the blind have no right to urge you to cease your association with NAC and that (regardless of the right

or wrong of the matter) you will not cease that association unless the blind promise to be “good”, you have failed to understand the temper of the blind or the climate of the times.

Yes, we think Recording for the Blind has done good and constructive work. However, we think you behaved irresponsibly in seeking accreditation from NAC, and we think there is no disgrace in admitting it. In fact, quite the contrary. If you wait a little longer, your deliberations and investigations will be unnecessary, for NAC will be dead—and the blind of the Nation will doubtless remember accordingly. Until such time as NAC's death occurs, the atmosphere is not likely to be “conducive to calm reasoned deliberation.”

In view of the tone of your letter I am not sure why you wrote it at all. The blind of the Nation wish Recording for the Blind well and think highly of its work, but we also wish it to get out of NAC since NAC does damage to the lives of the blind. Surely this is not an unreasonable attitude, or one that is difficult to understand. You have the data and the evidence, and we know that you have it. Further, you know that we know that you have it. Therefore, we await your decision and hope that you will work with us, not against us. After all, your avowed purpose is to *help* the blind, not *fight* us. □

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*
National Federation of the Blind

" . . . THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE"

[Reprinted from the *Broadcaster* publication of Blue Cross In Indiana]

Most of the dictated letters sent to Word Processing [division] for preparation touch the hands of Pat Maurer. A word processor since September, 1974, Pat types the variables of the letters (name, address, date, et cetera) from the dictator onto her Redaction machine, which records them onto tapes. These tapes are then combined with basic form letter tapes to produce final letters.

This is Pat's first typing job, and, "I like it really well," she smiled. According to her supervisor, Mike Brown, "Pat is an excellent performer and usually exceeds one hundred per cent of her standards. She makes every effort to go above and beyond the normal workload, and is always enthusiastic about it."

Born premature and weighing two and one-half pounds, Pat was an incubator baby for a dangerously long time. As a result, her retinas detached causing blindness. "I have about two per cent vision, but, for all practical purposes, I'm totally blind," said Pat. "Occasionally, I can see shadows, but can't really distinguish them."

Pat grew up near Des Moines, Iowa, and graduated from Drake University in 1973 with a degree in elementary and special education. She taught reading to third, fourth, and fifth graders during the summers in the public school system in Burlington, Iowa. "In the beginning I was hired for one 'trial' week with no pay to prove I could really do it. I guess they were convinced because they paid me from then on," Pat laughed.

People would ask Pat how she could teach reading, not being able to see. She explained: "I used Braille textbooks that exactly matched the children's workbooks, line for line. If a child had difficulty read-

ing a certain word, I would just count over to that word and help him with it."

Pat also used flashcards with written words on one side and Braille on the other, and made up a lot of games to help the children read. "I hired a student to help me with the paper work—marking the workbooks and doing the grades. Discipline was not much more of a problem than for any other teacher. Some of the children tried to see how much they could get away with . . . but they do that in any teacher's class."

Pat's husband, Marc, is also blind. They met at a rehabilitation program and were married in the summer of '73. While Marc completed his education at Notre Dame, Pat taught a program for the visually impaired in the South Bend schools.

"We moved here last summer so Marc could begin his first year at Indianapolis Law School. I wanted to get away from teaching because I like my evenings free. But, since my husband is a student, one of us had to work, so I decided to see if I could handle a typing job. The Corporations hired me, trained me on the job, and it has worked out really well.

"In the past, I've had trouble getting a salary equal to that of other people, but I didn't have any problems here. All the people have been really nice to me. At first, the girls did some of my work for me because they didn't think I was able to do it. But I changed their minds. Now, no one worries about me. I'm treated the same as everyone else, and I like it that way."

Off the job, Pat reads a lot at the library for the blind, where Braille books and cassettes are available. Pat also enjoys cooking. Just recently, she entertained 30 people for

dinner. "It was really an all-day affair getting ready for them, but it was worth all the effort."

Both Pat and Marc are active in the National Federation of the Blind. Marc is currently the president of the local affiliate—the Indiana Council of the Blind, a statewide organization numbering about 500 members. The organization works to change public attitudes about blindness and helps blind people become adjusted in jobs and daily living. The Council also works with legislation for the blind. "I really enjoy the group," commented Pat, "I feel I'm helping other blind people, as well as myself."

Pat explained her daily routine: "Our household is the same as everyone else's—it gets messy and has to be cleaned up, and we work just as hard at home as other people. In the past, we have had problems renting apartments—I guess some people think we are going to burn the place down. But in Indianapolis, we had no difficulty finding a place to live. They were very receptive to us."

Pat and Marc take the bus to work and school, and, "we don't get lost anymore," she laughed. "It's just like anyone—after you learn the way it's easy. If we do get lost trying to go somewhere, we just ask someone for directions. People are usually more than willing to help."

Pat goes grocery shopping once a month. "I make out a Braille list, and one of the store workers goes around with me to help

pick out items. She also does all her own clothes shopping. "The clerks help me with colors, and I can usually tell the styles by feeling the clothes. In choosing what to wear, I have an advantage over my husband because I know what color each of my dresses is from the material or style. Marc's shirts and pants, which are harder to tell apart, are marked with Braille tags."

Pat uses a white, fiberglass cane, almost as tall as she is, to help her navigate. When walking, she arcs it from side to side, always holding it about eight steps in front of her. "I don't usually find places by counting steps as some blind people do," said Pat. "My steps are not always the same length, so I would wind up in the wrong places. I learn the streets and find doorways with my cane."

"Crossing the street is easy. I just listen. When the traffic is moving in front of me, I know not to cross. When I hear it going beside me, I cross. Many people think that blind people have super hearing powers," commented Pat. "We just learn to use our hearing and develop it more than a person who can see. We learn to know things from their sounds rather than their looks."

Reflecting for a moment, Pat said, "You know, many blind people are hired to do mechanical jobs—jobs stressing the use of machines rather than the person's intelligence. I think other occupational fields should be opened to the blind, and opportunities broadened, so we can have the chance to prove our abilities. It's something to think about. . . ." □

THE U. S. FOREIGN SERVICE NOT FOR THE BLIND?

BY
RAMI RABBY

Editor's Note: Last fall Maryanne Masterson, a blind student about to graduate, applied to the U. S. Department of State to take the Foreign Service Officer Examination. Her scholastic training is sound and she has been a top flight student who has engaged in many extra-curricular activities which provide a variety of experiences and broaden one's view of living in the world.

The first reply from the Department of State indicated that Miss Masterson would be permitted to take the examination provided she supplied her own reader and completed the tests in the same time allotted to others.

This favorable action was struck aside a few days later in a letter from the Staff Director of the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service which said in part: "I note with sincere regret that I failed to point out to you that blindness is grounds for medical disqualification for appointment to the Foreign Service. A copy of the current medical requirements is enclosed." Here, once again, we have medical intrusion which is both inapt and inept, for the requirements look all too familiar; in fact, NAC itself might have drawn them. Not only do the requirements exhibit all the old shiboleths about the effects of blindness but arrogantly shunt off all those who have "any defect or disease which prevent a candidate from following a useful vocation in the U. S. . . ." Obviously and automatically that means the blind. Evidently, only those with the physical perfection of Greek gods and goddesses are suitable for employment by the U. S. Department of State.

Miss Masterson, still fairly new to the organized blind movement, turned to the

national level of the NFB for assistance. Rami Rabby, chairman of the NFB CEIP Committee, has been conducting a voluminous and vigorous correspondence with the Department of State on behalf of Miss Masterson. The Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate has been kept fully informed as has President Ford's Executive Office.

On May 3, 1975, Rami Rabby wrote directly to Secretary of State Kissinger protesting the State Department's adamant and unreasonable stance on the subject of visual requirements taken in a telephone conversation with the Department's Assistant Medical Director. After reviewing the circumstances, Mr. Rabby invited the State Department to send to our National Convention in Chicago "one of your designated representatives with whom we might discuss the issue of the Department of State's discriminatory hiring policies as they relate to blind persons." He went on: "Please recognize that it is the intention of the National Federation of the Blind to see this issue resolved satisfactorily, and that we believe that it is at our National Convention that we would accomplish this objective most effectively."

Dr. Sam Zweifel, Assistant Medical Director for Domestic Programs, replied on May 16 in a perfunctory manner and sent along a copy of the visual standards—as though that settled the matter. This was followed on May 23 by a letter from Dr. Zweifel's superior, Dr. Carl C. Nydell, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Medical Services. Dr. Nydell said in part "In the name of the Secretary, I would like to congratulate you and the National Federation

of the Blind for the strong progressive steps you are taking to assist the blind. We wish you every success in your upcoming annual convention in Chicago and, although a State Department representative will not be able to attend, we will be happy to discuss the Department's hiring policies and practices with you or your Washington representative at any time." Rami Rabby, in like manner, responded separately to the letters of May 16 and May 23 as follows:

May 27, 1975

DEAR DR. KISSINGER: In response to my letter to you of May 3, . . . You should know that the National Federation of the Blind views Dr. Zweifel's letter and the accompanying visual standards with astonishment and profound disappointment. The blind of the Nation are astonished at the total lack of awareness displayed by the Department of State as to the capabilities of blind persons, and we are extremely disappointed at the perfunctory manner in which the Department has attempted to evade the issue at hand.

The National Federation of the Blind does not regard the employment of the blind as a medical problem, and we are sorry that you should have seen fit to have a member of your medical staff respond to our complaint. To the National Federation of the Blind, the principal problem facing blind persons is not so much the physical loss of sight, but rather the outdated social attitudes and traditional misconceptions about blindness generally held by society and those institutions within it such as the Department of State.

These attitudes and misconceptions perceive blindness as an all-embracing disability, and *all* blind persons as thereby necessarily incompetent in the face of adverse conditions, helpless when confronted with changing environments, and totally unadap-

tive to new cultures and foreign life styles. On the part of the Department of State, there is apparently no attempt to distinguish between the talents, skills, and abilities of one blind person and those of another. To the Department of State, *all* blind persons are ineligible, since blindness in and of itself, it has been assumed, renders us all incompetent.

Dr. Kissinger, the National Federation of the Blind believes that such a policy has been arbitrarily devised, that it constitutes the very essence of discrimination, and that it is devoid of any rational underpinning. Moreover, we intend to pursue all courses of action available to us (including litigation, if necessary) in order to insure that the Department of State strike these visual standards from its manuals, and cease this discriminatory hiring practice.

As I told you in my letter of May 3, we feel that the most useful first step you might take toward a satisfactory resolution of this matter would be to send to our up-coming National Convention your highest ranking officer in charge of formulating, implementing, and modifying the Department of State's personnel policies and practices. In this way, we shall be able to begin a substantive and meaningful dialogue with you on this issue. We very much regret that you saw fit to ignore this request so far, and hope you will now choose to respond to it positively by designating an appropriate member of your personnel (not medical) staff as your representative at our Convention.

Please feel free to communicate either with me at the address on my letterhead or with the National Federation of the Blind's Washington Representative, Mr. James Gashel, at the National Federation of the Blind, Suite 212, Dupont Circle Building, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience, and am,

Yours sincerely,
RAMI RABBY, *Chairman*
*Cultural Exchange and Inter-
national Program Committee*
National Federation of the Blind

June 9, 1975

DEAR DR. KISSINGER: The purpose of this letter is to respond to a communication which I have received, under date of May 23, from Dr. Carl C. Nydell, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Medical Services, regarding the Department of State's discriminatory hiring policy toward blind persons. Since the position of the National Federation of the Blind on this issue was quite clearly stated in my letter to you of May 27, I shall limit my remarks to the new material contained in Dr. Nydell's letter.

Dr. Nydell writes, in part, as follows: "... in the name of the Secretary, I would like to congratulate you and the National Federation of the Blind for the strong progressive steps you are taking to assist the blind." Dr. Kissinger, given the Department of State's intransigently negative attitude toward the employment of blind persons in foreign service officer positions, and its outright refusal to send an appropriate representative to our annual Convention, the National Federation of the Blind considers Dr. Nydell's statement to be not only meaningless but also condescending and patronizing in the extreme.

If the Department of State does, in fact, believe, as it says, that the philosophy and activities of the National Federation of the Blind are "strong" and "progressive," one wonders why it does not choose to join us in our efforts, and make an intelligent and

reasoned decision to strike from its hiring regulations the arbitrary and unreasoned visual standards which it has established. Moreover, it is our belief that only by sending to our Chicago Convention the officer in charge of formulating, implementing, and modifying the Department of State's personnel policies and practices, will you demonstrate to the blind of the Nation the sincerity which is sadly lacking in Dr. Nydell's letter, and the genuine dedication required to bring this issue to a satisfactory resolution.

Let me reiterate what I said to you in my letter of May 27. The National Federation of the Blind does not regard employment of blind persons by the Department of State as a medical problem, but rather as one of prejudice and discrimination, well-intentioned as such prejudice and discrimination may be. Accordingly, we would like to initiate a dialogue with your senior personnel officials on this issue, and we believe that our Convention is, at this point in the process, the most appropriate forum for this purpose.

In conclusion, you should know that the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are intensifying their interest in this matter. Particularly gratifying to us has been the contact which Senator Sparkman's office has initiated with us.

Since the date of our Convention is fast approaching, we would very much appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience. □

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

RAMI RABBY, *Chairman*
*Cultural Exchange and International
Program Committee*
National Federation of the Blind

RADIO READING SERVICE MEETING DRAWS 200

BY
ELAINE DAVENPORT

Editor's Note: The author is the Coordinator of Radio Talking Book of the Seattle Public Library, Seattle, Washington. The following article is printed from the service's *Newsletter*.

The First National Conference for Radio Reading Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped persons, sponsored by the American Foundation for the Blind, was held in Oklahoma City, March 10 to 13. Those who attended agreed that it was an extremely successful conference; enthusiasm ran high. All of the presentations were very informative and conference sessions were all well attended. The total number of people registered for the conference was 200. Conference attendees were from various state services for the blind, regional libraries, other organizations for and of the blind, public radio stations, volunteer groups and interested Oklahoma citizens.

There is no way to detail all of the information presented at the conference; however, much of it will be available in "The Handbook on Radio Information Services for the Print-Handicapped," prepared by Sam Holt and published by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Draft copies of the Handbook were passed out at the conference for discussion. Material in the handbook is currently being updated to include new information from the conference. The final handbook is expected to be ready for distribution soon. We'll let you know how to get a copy in a future *Newsletter*.

William F. Gallagher of AFB opened the conference by presenting our host, Travis Harris, who gave a true Southern welcome. The keynote address, "Why Radio Reading

Services for Blind and Physically Handicapped Persons," was presented by C. Stanley Potter, Director of SSB, St. Paul, Minnesota. As most of you know, the first radio reading service was initiated in St. Paul. Then Travis Harris and Bill McIlvain of Oklahoma gave a brief summary of the development of the radio reading service in Oklahoma, and Elaine Davenport summarized the development of the Radio Talking Book in Seattle, Washington. Also in the first morning's session, Thomas Warnock of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting told about the relationship of CPB to public radio nationally, and the extent of CPB's interest in radio services for the blind and physically handicapped.

The first afternoon session began with a talk by Mrs. Florence Grannis, Librarian at the Commission for the Blind in Des Moines, Iowa. Mrs. Grannis gave a dramatic presentation of the impact of open circuit newspaper reading service. There was a lively interchange afterwards on the pros and cons of open and closed circuit broadcasting, with an emerging understanding of the merits of each type of service. Later in the afternoon, Joanne Jonson and Dorothy Pederson of St. Paul, Minnesota, gave presentations of programming, which included some excellent examples.

On Wednesday morning, Joanne Jonson presented additional material on programming, including a discussion of consumer involvement. Then Robert Woods, Counsel for CPB, analyzed various legal problems which may arise in connection with FCC regulations on the Fair Use Doctrine, copyright, obscenity, and noncommercial use of public radio SCA.

The Wednesday afternoon session began with a technical engineering presentation by Bob Watson of Minnesota, John Kean of Seattle, and Gordon Randell of Oklahoma. They discussed radio receivers, transmission systems, and broadcast equipment, respectively. There were no other SCA engineers at the conference, therefore, the presentations were as nontechnical as possible. Following engineering, a section on funding was presented by Reverend Wittenbrink, WMRY, Belleville, Illinois; George Hollaway from the Catholic Development Conference, and Robert Whitstock of the Seeing Eye. Each of these speakers underscored the various pitfalls to be avoided in a successful funding program. Mr. Whitstock discussing the Seeing Eye funding in particular. This section was primarily devoted to the seeking of private funds.

The last morning was devoted largely to plans for the future. Arthur Zigouras, Pat Smith, and William Gallagher of AFB structured this section which turned into a spirited discussion of future plans. Kurt Cylke, Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress, presented his viewpoint of the state of communication services and library services in a very forthright manner which produced diverse spirited reactions from the audience. B. T. Kimbrough, Editor of *Dialogue Magazine*, indicated that *Dialogue* which has access to quantities of information of use to this particular audience, would like to become involved in producing material for radio distribution.

Elaine Davenport spoke on projected

plans for the continuation of the National Planning Committee and the various activities which it could pursue, including liaison with CPB and NPR, discussions on legal problem areas, structuring the cooperation between radio reading services, developing fund raising channels, and making these known to various services, and providing channels for input from consumers.

As final discussions followed, it became evident that there was great unanimity among attendees that the National Planning Committee's work should be continued and that another national conference should be held in 1976. As William Gallagher summarized the discussion, he indicated the interest of AFB in facilitating this national interchange, and thanked Travis Harris for hosting the conference in such a way that it had been an effective learning experience.

In addition to formal sessions of the conference, there was a visit to the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the studios of the Radio Talking Book. There were other informal sessions between those operating radio reading services and newcomers asking questions.

There were five receiver manufacturers represented: Norver Company, Pennsauken, New Jersey; McMartin Industries, Inc., Omaha, Nebraska; MarComm, Inc., Santa Ana, California; Johnson Electronics, Inc., Casselberry, Florida, and FixTune Electronics, Inc., New York, New York. Each company displayed its product for those attending the conference. □

BLIND ROPE MAKER

BY

BURTON SWOPE

[Reprinted by courtesy of *The Hanford (Calif.) Sentinel*]

The place doesn't look much like a factory. With its long flower-box shape and weathered wooden exterior it could easily pass for an aging warehouse or garage. And a glance through one of the dust-flecked windows at the stacks of cardboard boxes inside, cobwebbed rafters and the hodgepodge of old equipment might convince you that's exactly what it is.

In fact, if it wasn't for the handmade business sign above its Sixth Street entrance and a large utility pole decorated with black-and-white striped horsehair ropes stretched between two rusting pulleys, the building would be undistinguished among the jumble of mobile homes, single-story stuccos and timbered dwellings that make up Kettleman City.

But what it lacks in appearances, Bob Mills Rope Factory makes up in utility and sheer uniqueness. The business is one of a kind in Kings County.

Making it even more unique is the owner himself—forty-nine year old blind rope maker Bob Mills. Undaunted by his handicap, Mills makes and sells hundreds of feet of rope a month mostly in 16- and 22-foot lengths to wholesale dealers and cowboys.

The factory isn't one of those slick, mass production, sales chart operations either. It's small and family-run with a tradition of craftsmanship that was once part of an earlier America. His product—a holdout in an age of plastics and other synthetics—is made from horsehair, mohair, and cotton. Mills and his wife, Pauline, have operated the business since 1958 when they took it over from "Blind Sam" Champlin, the founder and designer.

A Kettleman area Standard Oil Company worker, Champlin was blinded in a dynamite explosion while prospecting for gold in 1936. He started the business three years later designing most of the machinery now in use at the factory. Mills, also almost totally deaf now, has been blind since he was thirteen from a brain tumor. The tumor was removed by surgeons. He can see just a little out of one eye and is able to distinguish light and dark. He can also read black crayon letters two inches high and scrawled on white paper when held up close to the eye, but most of his reading is done with Braille.

Before the Mills came to Kettleman City to take over Champlin's factory, they were engaged in chicken ranching in Winton—an enterprise which turned out to be less than profitable. Mills got the factory with the help of rehabilitation workers in Fresno and worked with Champlin six months before the old man retired. The factory is crammed with cardboxes containing the already read Braille materials.

"He doesn't throw anything away," explains Mrs. Mills.

Mills buys the hair for his ropes from a Santa Rosa dealer, but he says he only uses hair from the mane of the horse, not the tail. "There's been a shortage of mane, though," says Mrs. Mills. "It was coming from slaughter houses in Canada but some law was passed not to let it into the country. We've had a lot of orders we can't take because of the shortages and we're months behind in the orders we have now."

Mills normally buys between 300 to 400 pounds of horsehair every three or four months. He says it takes about three pounds

of hair to make a good pound of rope, plus "a lot of work and a lot of skill." Once the Mills get the raw materials to make the ropes, the hair is washed, dried on racks behind the factory, hand separated by color, combed, spun into threads and then combined into strands.

Mills, using a machine mounted on wheels which rolls on railroad tracks down the center of the 118-foot long building, then twists the strands into rope of the desired length and thickness—usually one-quarter to three-quarters of an inch. Mills says he knows when he has reached the correct rope length by "landmarks" along the track, such as a dark and light trash can at the 22-foot mark and a piece of black machinery at the 16-foot mark.

"I can see the big things. I've got what you call 'traveling vision' with five per cent of my normal vision in the one eye," he says. He points out Champlin used staples protruding from the wooden track ties to measure his distances. After the rope strands are twisted to tension and Mills "lays" the rope, he ties off the end with what he calls a "Turk's Head" knot and marks it with a piece of leather. Most of the ropes mix light and dark hairs to give them a striped effect and come in black and white, brown and white, or a mixture of all three. No dyeing is used in the process. Mills can

also make ropes stretching up to 60 feet long.

Not all the work at the factory is done by Mills and his wife. Sons Bobby, 13, and David, 6, take a hand, too. "Bobby helps with separating the hairs and David helps with running mohair off the 50-pound spool it comes on to smaller spools for use on the twister," explains Mrs. Mills. When not making rope, Mills enjoys walking his two dogs in the Kettleman Hills. "I go for a hike with the dogs every day," he says with a smile. He also does a lot of reading, especially of religious materials. He used to teach Sunday school until his hearing got so bad he was forced to quit, he says.

That Mills is a deeply religious man is evidenced by the dozens of white art board signs annotated with religious and other inspirational epigrams in black crayon and hanging throughout the factory. "Trials will make you bitter or better," says one. "Fear God and live one day at a time," says another. "If we pray in time of victory we will not be discouraged in time of defeat." "When the going gets tough, the tough keep going," "Daily prayer lessens daily cares," are others. "Some of these signs have been here for 16 years. I write down sayings I hear or read," he says, pausing for a minute at the twister and going back to work. □

LOUISIANA CONVENTION

BY
HARVEY HEAGY

The Greater New Orleans chapter did the honors for the NFB of Louisiana's annual convention which was held at the Delta Towers Hotel in New Orleans, April 11 through 13. Weeks before the convention, chapter members under the able leadership

of convention chairman Jack James were busily making preparations for what turned out to be one of the best gatherings that Louisiana Federationists have experienced.

Public service announcements were sent to every radio and television station in the

community, and interviews were conducted to alert the community, especially the blind, that NFB was back in force and to attend the convention.

The convention opened on Friday evening with registration and hospitality. On Saturday, April 12, the opening session was called to order by local chapter president, Hank LaBonne. Following a welcome by a representative from neighboring Jefferson Parish, presiding duties were assumed by Harvey Webb, State president. Richard Edlund, NFB representative, assured Federationists that the NFB was by far the most representative group of blind persons nationwide, and urged local members to continue to write congressional representatives in support of the disability insurance bill.

The legislative focus then shifted to the local level, as State Representative Elward Bradey and Senator Nat Keifer spoke on the Model White Cane Law and its chances for passage. Both legislators assured us that the law would pass if Federationists continued the fight to make the need for this law known to their representatives. The morning session was capped off by a discussion of a resolution to leave the Louisiana division for the blind as is, rather than fragment its services under a new proposed reorganization of State government.

Also, during the morning session, our convention was graced by a surprise visit from the State's chief executive, Governor Edwin Edwards, who pledged to sign any piece of legislation needed to better the lives of the State's blind population.

State librarian Judy LaStrapp opened the afternoon session with a briefing on library services in the State. She said that borrowers have substantially increased over the last three years and that space, a problem familiar to all libraries, was a severe problem. The Federation pledged its help to the

regional library in any way possible. Harvey Heagy, a member of the Greater New Orleans chapter, then led a panel discussion on employment of the blind. Although it was generally noted that employment opportunities for the blind are severely limited in Louisiana, Heagy told of his duties as a radio announcer and newsman for a New Orleans radio station. Leroy Cordova spoke on the job of a tax services representative for the IRS. Steven Henry gave his assessment of his employment as an information clerk for the post office, Miles Bartholamew gave a talk on his job as a darkroom technician in a hospital, and A. C. Dubriel spoke of his occupation as a program designer. Each of Louisiana's six chapters then gave a report on what it considered to be its accomplishments during the past year, and Lita Rooney closed the session with a talk on services for the blind provided by the local Lighthouse for the Blind, and demonstrated the OPTACON.

Mr. Edlund keynoted the banquet which was well attended. He spoke of the Federation as a way of thinking and the philosophy behind the movement. He informed us of our need for self-sacrifice if the movement is to continue its role as the strongest organization of the blind in the country. Finally, the Lafayette chapter received an award for raising the most funds during the past year.

The convention closed with a routine business session on Sunday. At the meeting, three resolutions were adopted: (1) To leave the division for the blind in its present form; (2) urges the Federation to work with the Legislature for the drafting and adoption of a sheltered workshop law which would call for, among other things, the workshops to pay at least minimum wage to its handicapped employees, and to consider blind people for the higher paying management positions; (3) calls upon the Legisla-

ture to adopt legislation which would give to the blind the rights to run the concessions in the new State-owned super sports arena.

The final order of business was the election of officers. Harvey Webb decided not to seek reelection for personal reasons. Newly elected Federation officers for 1975-76 are: President, John Lemaire, Lafayette; first vice president, Edie Figueron, Lafayette; second vice president, Alfred Blakes, Monroe; secretary, Bud Terrio, Morgan City; treasurer, Elanor Dire, Baton Rouge. Joining board members Hank Labonne, Joyce Vaughn, and A. C. Dubriel, are newly elected members, Weston Navarre, Lafayette; Mary Lou Carter, Baton Rouge; and Harvey Heagy, New Orleans. Beginning

next year, each chapter will elect its own board member, with the board changing one year, and the officers the next.

Despite a crippling citywide transit strike which virtually paralyzed all methods of public transportation throughout the metropolitan area, Federationists were out in force approaching businessmen asking that they either purchase space in the convention program or donate door prizes. Most merchants were extremely cooperative including New Orleans' two professional sports teams, the NFL New Orleans Saints, and the ABA Jazz, each of whom donated autographed balls with the Jazz also buying an ad. The chapter also conducted a raffle of a mixer to raise money. □

DELAWARE CONVENTION

The annual convention of the NFB of Delaware was held on Saturday, April 5, in the Grecian Room of the Presto Restaurant, Wilmington, Delaware, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The invocation was given by the Rev. Lynwood Swanson, chaplain for the Wilmington Medcial Center and director of the Department of Pastoral Care.

The Washington report was given most ably by Mr. Ken Wu, legislative aide to U. S. Senator William V. Roth. Mr. Wu gave a very thorough report on the current legislation in Washington with particular emphasis on the Randolph-Shepherd amendments. He also touched upon the special education programs that are currently under way and indicated that more information would be forthcoming in the afternoon when Ms. Lynn Young would speak on the new programs being undertaken by the Bureau for the Visually Impaired. He noted that the Federal Government is expanding the

employment of blind people. Questions were raised from the audience regarding the rumors about the Social Security program becoming bankrupt. Mr. Wu stated that a "white paper" should be issued to lull these fears. Senator Roth feels that the earning limitations should be abolished and benefits increased for those who defer retirement.

Mrs. Alice Capadanno, supervisor of the Adult Services Unit, Bureau for the Visually Impaired, spoke on the new programs for involving the older blind in the activities of the senior centers. Mrs. Capadanno stated that of the approximately 1,100 blind people in the State about one-half are over age 60. Transportation still remains a major problem.

Mr. Mel Slawick, New Castle County Executive, spoke of the county's plans for new senior centers, housing for the handicapped, and so on. It was stressed from the audience that the blind are not asking so much for special housing, as not to be excluded and

discriminated against in ordinary housing. This has occurred although the Model White Cane Law does prohibit it. Mr. Spence asked Mr. Slawick's cooperation with the Advisory Council on the Blind for the bureau in finding adequate housing for a new and much-needed workshop. Mr. Slawick stated that if the county does take over the Absalom Jones School this could be a definite possibility and said that he was most willing to discuss the matter.

The noon-time banquet address was given by Ralph Sanders, Second Vice President of the National Federation of the Blind. Mr. Sanders gave a very moving speech about the "Federation on the March." Mr. Sanders' talk was one that filled all of us with renewed energy and vigor. May Brooks Brown aptly expressed the feelings of all in what can be summarized as the theme song of the Federation—"Glory, Glory Federation."

The afternoon session was kicked off by a talk by Mr. Earl McGinnis, secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, whose topic was "The Advantages of the Advisory Councils in the Cabinet Form of Government." Mr. McGinnis stated that there are now four times as many agencies as there were under the old commission type of government. It was brought out that under the commission form of government, the commissioners served as volunteers and now under this type of government with four times as many agencies as there were under the old system, the administrative overhead is far greater. Stressed to Mr. McGinnis was the feeling of the Federation about consumer representation on the advisory councils.

Mr. Norman Balot, chief of the Bureau for the Visually Impaired, gave a report on the activities of the agency for the year and then turned the afternoon session over to

Ms. Lynn Young who is supervisor of the educational services unit. Ms. Young outlined the plans for the future education of our blind children including new programs which she is writing for Federal funding. She announced the opening of a new resource school in Milford, at which a blind teacher is employed. There are currently 106 blind children in schools in the State. The education department consists of three itinerant teachers, one youth counselor, a volunteer coordinator, and two resource teachers. Early diagnosis is planned in the screening in the day-care centers in the State.

There was much discussion of the education program. Mrs. Spence brought forth some of the questions that had been raised at meetings of the PTA for the Visually Impaired who had requested a seminar of this type. However, no other PTA members were present.

Ms. Marion Levenburg, coordinator of volunteer services, gave a short resume of the volunteer program.

Mr. Spence asked the roving ambassador of good-will, Mr. John McCraw, president of the NFB of Maryland, to make a few remarks. John was accompanied by his lovely wife, Connie, and brought us greetings from their organization.

The day's activities were concluded with the election of two board members whose terms had expired, Marie Munis and Charles Cannon; it was moved and seconded that they both be reelected by acclamation; motion was unanimously carried. Stanley Smith and Bill Driver were nominated as the delegates to the National Convention in July; Bill Driver was elected delegate.

The meeting was then adjourned with the feeling that we had accomplished a great deal with our one-day session. □

MONITOR MINIATURES

Mr. B. T. Kimbrough, age 32, has recently been named Editor-in-Chief of "Dialogue" magazine with headquarters in Berwyn, Illinois. Kimbrough is a graduate of the University of Louisville School of Music. He was formerly news director and host of a program "Lets Talk It Over" at a radio station. Kimbrough will also be responsible for fund raising for the organization.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) has named a five-member study group of Public Administration specialists to evaluate the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The group will not only study the administration of the SSI program but will also conduct a broad assessment of program concepts, including the role of Federal and state governments. The group is expected to recommend administrative and legislative improvements and also review fiscal accountability. This would appear to be a move on the part of HEW to counter-balance the sweeping study of SSI now underway by the Senate Finance Committee.

In "News and Views," publication of the NFB of Colorado, there is reported a strong push ahead on organization of chapters in that State. Just one year ago they had only three fully functioning chapters. Today they have seven. This tremendous organizing effort has been the result of teamwork all around. It isn't easy to walk into a strange town and round up blind people. Yet the job got done.

Recent elections at a general meeting of

the NFB of Denver resulted in the following roster of officers: Georgia Morash, president; Dianna McGeorge, first vice president; Judy Miller, second vice president; John Bear, secretary; Pat Epperson, treasurer; and board members Ruth Ashby, Richard Moon, and Ted Suell.

This year at its annual convention, the NFB of Minnesota elected the following officers: Joyce Scanlan, president; Clarence Johnson, vice president; Curtis Chong, secretary; Tom Scanlan, treasurer; and James Brennan, Steve Jacobson, and James Schleppegrell as board members.

The NFB of Maine welcomes the officers of its newest chapter, the NFB of Lewiston-Auburn, with Paul Dube as president; Richard Daigneault, vice president; Diane La-Fontaine, secretary; Rita Bellevance, treasurer; and Connie Ouellette, board member. Congratulations to you all!

The most recent issue of *Performance*, publication of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, reports on the results of a public hearing held in New York City, its purpose to discuss the effects of unemployment on handicapped people. The report states in part:

"The system of rehabilitation took quite a shellacking. For one it was said that the training of handicapped people is being 'mis-handled.' Rehab professionals were too 'theoretic' and not 'pragmatic.' The selection of counselors must emphasize a living knowledge of the world of work. 'Too often counselors have negative attitudes towards

their own clients. They train them for jobs they're not even sure exist, and they labor away trying to satisfy employer requirements without having bothered to talk with the employer.' Said another, 'There needs to be a vast improvement in the caliber of people who deal with handicapped people. Often counsellors are not job-ready themselves—they can't write a business letter, don't know how to compose a resume. What is needed are people trained in job engineering. They should have business contacts, industrial engineering experience, the ability to work with a team with rehab specialists.' Said another, 'The whole process of selective placement should be brought under review. It is far, far too slow.' What should the government do? Certainly far more than it sees fit to do now; it should be a source of labor market forecasting, so that job training can be intelligently foresighted and carefully planned. The government should provide information to employers about available handicapped workers. It should think of tax incentives, make sure that the Federal laws on the books are enforced. The suggestions appeared endless, and yet one thing was clear. The situation is grave, and New Yorkers believe steps must be quickly taken by the government, by the professional, and by the handicapped person."

The Pierce County Association of the Blind will host the NFB of Washington State convention in Tacoma on October 9 to 12. All members are invited. Inquiries concerning reservations and other details should be sent to Dorothy Inks, 612 S. Junett, Tacoma, Washington.

John A. Reardon is the new Executive

Director of the Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts. Mr. Reardon comes to the agency from the Exxon Corporation where he served as Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of Esso Standard Thailand, Ltd. His extensive experience in management and his social commitment have drawn him into key roles in varying civic organizations. In Thailand, he was president of the International School of Bangkok. He was also president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. In addition to many similar activities, he is a member and lecturer in the American Management Association.

In a recent editorial in the NFB of Mississippi publication Mr. E. U. Parker, Jr., President and also an Executive Committee member of the NFB, asks: "Why are there so many of the independent blind who do not pitch in with the organized blind? Why most of those who work for certain agencies prefer to live off the blind instead of with the blind? These questions we do not pretend to answer in full. But the history in Mississippi and all over the Nation is that services for the blind and living conditions of the blind do progress when the blind organize and push for those improvements. It is time for you to talk to your blind friends and the friends of the blind about joining with the NFB so even greater progress can be made. Some may think that they could accomplish more outside the movement. Granted that a few have helped without working within the movement, even they could have done more pushing with the crowd rather than pulling against it. It is important for you to have the help of your fellow blind people, and it is important for you to help other blind people. So let's all get together and present the unified front

that will still further enrich the lives of each of us.

The Hadley School for the Blind announces two new, free correspondence courses available on cassette. "Rights and Responsibilities," available on cassette or in Braille, is a ten-lesson home study course that will answer questions through study based on the articles of the Bill of Rights and the broadened meaning of "freedom of speech," "right to trial by jury," and "due process" as understood in today's courtroom.

"Relevant Braille" is the Hadley School's long-awaited answer for those who plan to continue doing their literary reading through recordings, yet would find it helpful to be able to jot down names, addresses, phone numbers, dates, and the many useful reminders of daily life in simple, easy-to-write-and-read Braille. "Relevant Braille" comes in just five lessons and a cassette of instructions, a Braille writing slate and stylus, other practical examples and on completion of the course the student receives the writing slates and stylus as a permanent gift. Request further information from the Registrar, Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, Illinois 60093.

Mrs. Hazel Staley, president of the NFB of North Carolina, recently wrote to President Jernigan as follows: I am delighted to inform you that on June 1 we organized our sixth chapter, the NFB of Cumberland County (Fayetteville). For several months Ralph Thompson, our State membership chairman, and his wife, Pat, have been contacting blind people in and around Fayetteville. In March I went down and met with a group. It all culminated in the organization of a chapter there on June 1. Raymond C. Davis was elected president. Raymond operates a craft shop. He and his wife, Pauline, attended our seminar in Charlotte on May 17 and they are planning to attend our national Convention in Chicago. The vice president is Nancy Henry. Nancy's husband is in the army and is ready to leave on an overseas tour. Nancy teaches retarded children and emotionally disturbed adults under a government program. Janet Bostic, a high school student, is the secretary. The treasurer is Carrie Lee Gaddy, a homemaker. The potential in this chapter looks good and we are very happy to add them to our membership. The chapter will hold its meetings on the first Sunday afternoon of each month in the fellowship hall of the Person Street Methodist Church.

□

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
2652 SHASTA ROAD
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94708

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 581
DES MOINES, IOWA